Introduction of the Post of the EU Foreign Affairs Minister & Possible Consequences for the EU Foreign Policy

Theoretical Analysis

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Introduction and Questions of Research

Ever since the disastrous dissolution of former Yugoslavia revealed major deficiencies in the then nascent Common Foreign Security and Policy of the European Union, many efforts were made to strengthen the Second Pillar, as both the necessity to develop a much needed military capability and to improve coordination over the employment of means at the EU's disposal were universally acknowledged by policy-makers and scholars alike. The Treaty of Amsterdam introduced the office of the High Representative for CFSP, a much-needed "face and voice" of the EU. And in 2005, the Constitutional Treaty finally ushered in the brand new office of the EU Foreign Affairs Minister.

Although at present the Constitutional Treaty could be considered a "dead letter" and it might take years – if ever – before the EU Foreign Affairs Minister materializes, the scholarly interest in discerning the *possible ramifications of the introduction of the EU Foreign Minister for the EU foreign policy* seems both rewarding and justifiable. But before addressing this main research question, two other issues should be clarified: *what is the European foreign policy*; and why *is the EU a full-fledged and deserving candidate for foreign policy analysis*. Deriving from the fact that these questions continue to stir a lively academic debate, it would be irrational on our part to overlook them. To this end, European Foreign Policy Analysis will be employed as the main theoretical instrument.

1.1. Choice of Theory: Relevance of Foreign Policy Analysis Perspective on Europe

Before moving onto explaining the EU's Foreign Policy and to what extent it will be affected by the introduction of the EU Foreign Affairs Minister's office, it seems logical to briefly elucidate the choice to prefer the European Foreign Policy Analysis over the dominating theories of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) and International Relations alike. In principle I agree with Steve Smith's arguments that the very fact of both FPA and IR being overwhelmingly American subject, meaning that the US approaches dominate this field of study (not least because of striking numerical asymmetry whereas about 500 US FPA scholars and few dozen of their European counterparts will certainly face different tasks of exerting influence in this field of study, as pointed out by Smith (Smith, 1994:11)), automatically implies that addressing the US concepts and the US policy concerns becomes axiomatic whereas relevancy of the US FPA for the European setting could be quite doubtful. Moreover, Smith identifies the multidimensional character of this problem, one of which emanates from the assertion that as far as the US political system is quite different from its European counterpart the utility of the US theories for the European setting seems to be problematic. Another main dimension is the question of policy agenda the American FPA deals with. Smith argues that the whole discipline of international relations has been spawned with approaches that are primary concerns of the US only, and if one traces evolution of various FPA approaches and real events facing by the US leaders at the same time, s/he will find a clear linkage. This reasoning leads him to the conclusion that "the rise and fall of various FPA approaches have more to do with the changing agenda facing the US than with any theoretical deficiencies." (Smith, 1994:11-14)

Stark dichotomization (along theoretical, epistemological and policy-agenda dimensions) between two scientific communities offered by Smith was objected by a number of scholars stressing that clear division of "American" and "European" approaches is oversimplification. (For details, see Smith, 1994: 11-15) However, as far as

universal foreign policy theory has yet to be developed, elaboration of the European FPA approach, taking into consideration all the peculiarities of the EU as a *sui generis* entity, could be desirable at least, and necessary at best.

Brian White argues that before applying various structuralist theories and/or traditional realist/FPA perspective to explain European foreign policy, analysts have to think twice about their relevance in this case, stating that "the point was made 20 years ago and broadly accepted ever since that foreign policy-making in an EC/EU context is *sui generis* and that scholars should beware of simply transposing the traditional analytical categories of FPA to a European context." (White, 1999:39) This argument seems to be dually important. Firstly, by questioning the relevance of "traditional" or the American FPA in the European context (particularly by pointing to the dangers associated with simple, unmodified adoption of its analytical tools to European foreign policy), White seems to echo, albeit rather implicitly, Smith's laments about dichotomy between two scientific communities. Secondly, the necessity to adopt a modified type of FPA approach that takes into consideration peculiar features of the European context is underlined once again.

It may sound trustworthy that growing disappointment in scholarly circles after decade-long and ultimately failed attempts to create a general foreign policy theory led to the stagnation in the field, but the same scenario could not be applied to research work specifically designed to apply FPA to European foreign policy – simply because there is severe dearth instead. In this light, Lister's often-cited quote that "the tools of traditional foreign policy analysis add relatively little to our understanding of the EU" (Lister, 1997:6 cited in White, 1999:39) is quite interesting. While I agree with her aforementioned judgment (that traditional FPA failed), I consider her dismissal of FPA as an approach as premature and wrong. Premature because the European approach of FPA was not developed at the time when Lister was writing her book[1]. On the one hand, if the approach is not tested in the particular context it is designed for (in our case specifically for European Foreign Policy) it cannot be dismissed, and if the approach does not exist yet, we cannot rule out the possibility of its appearance in the future, therefore we cannot

[1] Carlsnaes and Smith's book is rather a set of contending approaches (as admitted by editors themselves) than an innovative, coherent attempt to apply FPA to the European context.

judge its merits in advance. Lister did quite the opposite that makes me deem her dismissal of FPA as wrong.

Logical sequel of Smith's assumption that real events influence subsequent development of foreign policy approaches implies that the recent events, including the Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 2004 Enlargement, the ill-fated European Constitution and the current nuclear impasse over Iran are likely to boot research work about the CFSP. A circular and mutually beneficial process can be discerned: foreign policy concerns lead to the development of foreign policy approaches and foreign policy approaches then help deal with foreign policy concerns. I assume that this assertion maybe oversimplified, but its logical correctness seems to be undoubted.

1.2. Finding Niche for the EU: Actor-Centric vs. State-Centric Approach

Christopher Hill defines foreign policy as "the sum of official external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in international relations." (Hill, 2003:3). The importance of actors as a category in the analysis of international relations in general and the European foreign policy in particular has been highlighted by White as well, who argues that weaknesses of structuralist approaches emanate from their alleged failure to adopt more actor-based perspective where appropriate, in the analysis of system. (White, 1999: 40-41) However, while White's suggestion is to complement "macro"-analyses of structuralism with some form(s) of "micro", actor- centered analysis, Hill explicitly states that "in the study of foreign policy the central category is that of actors". (Hill, 2003: 47) The problem one tackles now is whether FPA should take "state-centric" or "actor-centric" approach in the European context. As Michael Smith puts it, "the central conceptual building block of the field [FPA] is the notion of state and the governmental power" (Smith, 1994 as cited in White, 1999: 41). "State-centricity" is one of the assumptions underpinning "state-centric realism", as traditional foreign policy approach was dubbed by Joseph Nye (Nye, 1975:36), basically implying that states are the most or only important actors in the international system, and therefore most foreign policy concepts and theories are focused on nation states. (see Ginsberg, 1989; Allen,

1998) As Allen himself argues, "we all know that multinational companies, private individuals, religious organizations and international organizations all exert influence in the international system but we tend not to describe their activities as 'foreign policy'. We usually account for their influence by examining the extent to which they impact on national foreign policies". (Allen, 1998:43)

Hill's position in this continuum, where "state-centric" and "actor-centric" approaches lie on the poles, is interesting. On the one hand, he states that "at the level of international system the states are the most important single class of actors given their preponderant influence over the means of political mobilization" (Hill, 2003:39) and views states as the main sources of foreign policy. On the other hand he points to the variety of non-state actors (churches, international pressure groups, terrorist networks, multinational corporations), and concludes that "even where an actor is not wholly independent of states, lacks a clear constituency and has only a limited range of concerns, it may still be worth viewing in terms of foreign policy analysis."(Hill, 2003:41) Moreover, unlike Ginsberg, Hill observes that there is no reason to restrict foreign policy analysis to states even if it may be more to say about them. (see Ginsberg, 1989. Hill, 2003)

The transfer of perspective and analytical purposes associated with FPA from state to other significant international actors or indeed "mixed actor" systems seems to be feasible for White, observing that "after all, FPA emerged as a major field in IR during the early post-war period when there were no serious challengers to the state and it was logical to base a 'micro' analysis of international relations upon the state, evidently the principal actor within the international system. But, arguably, it was always the actor perspective rather than a specific actor or actors that was important to the foreign policy analyst" (White, 2001:35) His quote is echoed by Hill's aforementioned observation, that "actor" as a whole, and not a specific actor (be it nation-state or whatever), is the central category in the study of foreign policy. Furthermore, I think that White's aforementioned suggestion is not only feasible, but necessary as well. Failure of traditional "state-centric" FPA in European context was quite predictable taking into account the fact that while not being a state, an appropriate niche for the EU could not be found in the "state-centric" study – the EU simply does not qualify as a foreign policy actor for this approach.

1.3. European Foreign Policy: Contending Approaches to Definition

Scholarly debates aiming to find a universally accepted definition for the "European foreign policy" and what it might constitute are quite intense as outlined by the existence of numerous contradictory definitions. As Allen points out, "attempts to think about European foreign policy are often frustrated by uncertainties about how to define basic terms such as 'state' or 'foreign policy'" (Allen, 1998: 43). One will find an excellent proof of this argument's intellectual robustness by comparing writings of Allen himself on the one hand, and Christopher Hill and William Wallace on the other, whereas initial discrepancies over the concepts lead both scholars to diametrically different conclusions. Allen makes a distinction between EC external relations and EU foreign policy. But for him the focal point to identify foreign policy is the concept of "national interest." Allen argues that foreign policy can be defined as the process to identify and pursue national interests (i.e. ends or objectives) rather than by substance, be it politico-military or economic and cultural. (for issues of "high" and "low" politics see Hoffmann, 1966; Deutsch,1978; for distinction between external economic relations as "low" politics and more traditional politico-diplomatic activities as "high" politics see also Morgan,1973)

The pivotal role of national interests in Allen's chain of reasoning leads him to the conclusion that the difficulty to identify, articulate and pursue "European interests" (there is no "EU government,[2]" but alternative institutions who could perform these tasks are absent as well and need to be developed, he argues, if the European Union wants to develop foreign policy) ultimately dooms the idea of "European foreign policy." (Allen, 1998: 44-45) Hill and Wallace acknowledge that elevation of collective interest on the European level is not a story of success, but that is because of rising interpenetration of different governments, meaning that the national stage of policy-making is already infused with shared information (not only among foreign ministries, but between the

[2] White: "the solution elsewhere has been to substitute the term 'government' with the term 'governance to facilitate a study of government-like activities. As with replacing state by actor, it does not obviously damage the essence of an FPA approach to replace government with governance."(White, 2003:35). This is a punch below the waist, as far as Allen himself pointed out that the EU *is* state-like, even though it does not aspire for state-hood (Allen, 1998:45, my italics). If the unit is state-like, I think that an attempt to consider its ruling mechanism as government-like has a solid logical/intellectual foothold.

Ministries of Intelligence, Defense, and Interior as well, which leads to further dis-aggregation of state's external solidarity), collegiality and consensus-building between them, that lead to subtle redefinition of "national interest". (Hill and Wallace, 1996:11-2) Regarding issues of "high-" and "low-politics" Hill is skeptical, deems them as anachronistic[3], and by arguing that "foreign policy is therefore both more and less than the 'external relations' which states generate continually on all front," he does not put a special emphasis on *substance*, be it political, economic or whatsoever.(Hill, 2003:5)

From the perspective elaborated in standard institutionalist literature, the European foreign policy is synonymous (since 1993) to the EU foreign policy, thereby referring to foreign policy coordination first through the mechanism of the EPC later upgraded to the CFSP, as White observes. (White, 2001:38) This vision differentiates EPC/CFSP as "real European foreign policy" on the one hand, and external powers or "competences" established by the Treaty or Rome and generally dubbed as "external relations."(Laffan, 1992:50 in White, 2001:38)

It has been observed that "European foreign policy has been rather narrowly defined both in scope and level by the way 'foreign policy' is defined at the level of European institutions themselves." (Smith, H, 1998, 154-7 as cited in White, 2001:38) If the scope of European foreign policy is equated with processes/outcomes of the EPC/CFSP with significant political implications, White argues, the contribution of European member states to European foreign policy will be either downplayed by institutionalists or omitted almost completely by proponents of "EU as an actor" approach. (*Ibid*)

Reflecting Hill's definition of foreign policy activity in Europe as "the sum of what the EU and its member states do in international relations" (Hill, 1998:18 as cited in White, 2001:39), White concludes that defining European foreign policy as "member states' foreign policy," "EU foreign policy" or as "EC foreign policy[4]" is too restrictive, as far as European governance in the foreign policy field seems to take all three forms.

[3] "In a world where important international disputes occur over the price of bananas or illegal immigration it would be absurd to concentrate foreign policy analysis on relations between national diplomatic services. …once popular distinction between 'high' and 'low' politics is no longer of much help. ((Hill, 2003:4)

[4] Allen shares White's skepticism over this point,, declaring that "in sum, the idea that a European foreign policy could be built solely upon the foundations of the Community's external economic relations is misguided and flies in the face of the Union's own experience." (Allen, 1998:46)

He also outlines that although they are differentiated for analytical purposes, the analyst's main task should be identification of their intermix, because the more they are interwoven, the more justified is the usage of label "European foreign policy[5]" (*Ibid*).

1.4. Forms of European Foreign Policy

As we have already mentioned, Brian White identifies three different types of European foreign policy:

- **Community foreign policy** – refers to the foreign policy of the EC emerging as the consequence of European Communities' establishment in 1957. It covers principally trade and development relations with third parties. For the FPA perspective, as White explains, it unquestionably represents foreign policy, particularly constituting foreign economic policy dimension of European foreign policy.
- **Union foreign policy** – refers to more overtly political dimensions of European foreign policy. White deserves a lengthy quote here, arguing that "it consists of the coordination of the foreign policies of member states in process that, until the Single European Act of 1986, was pursued outside the legal framework of the Community." (White, 2001:41) Initially, this type of policy was formed as process of the EPC, upgrading in the TEU, where the EPC was replaced with a commitment under the terms of Treaty to establish a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).
- **National foreign policy** – referring to the separate foreign policies of member-states that have continued to exist. However, for a proper analysis of the European system of foreign policy, White thinks that the emphasis has to be placed upon to what extent the foreign policies of member-states have been transformed by the process of operating within the EU institutional context.

[5] Hill observes: "… [T]he two things [foreign policy and foreign economic policy] should be considered in tandem, but rarely are because of the intellectual difficulties of keeping such a wide range of activity in focus at the same time – and because of scholastic habit" (Hill, 2003:13-4)

> The description of this "transformed context" is given by Hill and Wallace: "Habits of cooperation, accepted advantages of shared information, responses to the common threats, cost saving through increased collaboration, have all significantly altered patterns of national policy-making" (Hill and Wallace 1996:12 as cited in White, 2001: 41)

The changing patterns of national policy-making has been traced by Hill and Wallace as well, arguing that "The states of Western Europe which conducted their foreign policies through European Political Cooperation should thus be seen, even in the early 1970s, as partially sovereign and partially constrained, not as the classical sovereign states of realist theory." (Hill and Wallace, 1996:11)

Although each of the three deserves lengthy and in-depth discussion, both the scholarly urge to keep the research paper coherent and focused on its research question and the limited size of the paper induces us to elaborate only on the CFSP since the EU Minister of Foreign Affairs was intended in effect to be the voice of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy.

2.1. CFSP: Lessons from Yugoslavian Wars

The EC/EU's lamentable performance during the wars of Yugoslavian dissolution – stemming both from inadequate political coordination of its member states and incapability of the existing institutions – has once again reinforced the idea that institutional development *per se* represented a necessity if the EU wanted to turn into a real player of the international political system. According to Jacque Delors, the ambition to become a coherent political actor among other things would require replacing the then extant Troika with a more effective mechanism to increase the presence and visibility of the Union (Delors, 1997: VII). Furthermore, Delors pointed to the need of creating planning and analysis capability at the EU level, presumably modeled along the lines of the US National Security Council, which prepares and reviews strategies and deals with crisis management as well. (*Ibid*) The lack of adequate strategic planning, forecasting and analysis capability as one of the major impediment of the CFSP has been underlined by scholars and practitioners alike (Bildt, 1998; White, 2001:110; Kintis, 1997:165).

2.2. The Treaty of Amsterdam and Introduction of High Representative for CFSP

Following the Member States' decision to make the CFSP upgrading the central topic on the agenda of the 1996-1997 IGC, the ensuing Treaty of Amsterdam brought about several quite significant changes aiming to make largely ill-fated foreign policy machinery of the Union more coherent and consistent. The Treaty introduced the post of the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security, fused with the office of the Council's Secretary-General.

"*The Secretary-General of the Council, High Representative for the common foreign and security policy, shall assist the Council in matters coming within the scope of the common foreign and security policy, in particular through contributing to the formulation, preparation and implementation of policy decisions, and when appropriate*

and acting on behalf of the Council at the request of the Presidency, through conducting political dialogue with third parties." (Art. J. 16 of the Amsterdam Treaty)

Establishment of the Policy Unit, a new planning and early warning entity in the Council's secretariat general, represents another notable innovation of the Treaty. The Policy Unit, which maintains a small number of staff, is directed by the High Representative and aims at enhancing much-needed strategic planning via "pinpointing strategic options, fleshing them out and implementing them.[6]" And although the quality of their performance in the long run still remains to be seen, the said two institutions are generally regarded as a success, especially the "Mr./Ms. CFSP" as a long-awaited "face and voice" of the EU (interestingly, the Clinton Administration stated in May 2000 that Javier Solana "was the fulfillment of Henry Kissinger's desire to have a phone number to talk to Europe").

While Solana's activism and efforts in the issues ranging from former Yugoslavia to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the recent Iran nuclear impasse are duly credited, in order to better understand the present and future state of the CFSP it would be interesting to look into the main factors that determine his success, and to find answer whether it is *Solana's* post or Solana's *post* that plays the crucial role?

2.3. The Constitutional Treaty and Introduction of the EU Foreign Affairs Minister

The Union Minister for Foreign Affairs shall conduct he Union's common foreign and security policy. He or she shall contribute by his or her proposals to the development of that policy, which he or she shall carry out as mandated by the Council. The same shall apply to the common security and defense policy (Art. L28, of the Constitutional Treaty)

All in all, even though Delors' calls for rectification of existing deficiencies in the CFSP were both acknowledged and addressed to, as the Amsterdam Treaty's relevant

[6] Source: *The Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation,* www.diplomatie.be

provisions prove, further institutional improvement soon became an issue. Governments agreed in the Constitutional Treaty to introduce a single EU Foreign Minister, a merger of the posts of the High Representative and the External Commissioner, the decision emanating from the objective to overcome the confusion and conflict in the responsibilities of the two, as noted by Hix (Hix, 2004). Whether this decision will manage to solve the extant institutional problems while not spawning new ones still remains to be seen, because wearing the "double hat" status is characterized with the mixture of supranational and intergovernmental elements and the EU Foreign Affairs Minister will be "in the middle of a vortex of strong inter- and intra-institutional tensions and pressures (Wessels, 2004; in Wessels 2005).

Alongside the two objectives of increasing the EU's actorness and solving institutional problems, several other factors at play have been discerned by other scholars, notably by Christopher Hill. According to Hill, the process of European integration in general and CFSP development in particular have been historically driven by four factors and/or sets of motives, which could be summarized as: the state-building imperative; the pressure for institutional reform; issues of democracy and accountability; the (super) power-building imperative in international relations (Hill, 2002).

2.4. EU Foreign Minister: The Role of Large Member States

For the EU Foreign Minister to become viable and efficient, support of large member states, particularly of Britain, France and Germany, bears an utmost importance. Since the Big Trio is able (and often willing) to act outside the EU framework in various formats and on different policy issues, their political clout both inside and outside the Union will largely determine whether the EU Foreign Affairs Minister's proposals will remain "dead letters" or not.

***Germany*:** Deriving from Germany's foreign policy stance, described as "multilateral, pacifist and pro-integrationist," (Meiers, 1995; in Allen and Webber, 2002) and her considerable enthusiasm in European integration in general and the CFSP (as she

did regarding EPC) in particular, Berlin's policies promise to remain less inclined to free-riding[7].

***France*:** While the tactics of French foreign policy have evolved to cope with the ever-changing world, the general directions remain the same, as observed by Martial: "the establishment of a confederation; the preservation of sovereignty; the containment of Germany – the pillars of French foreign policy were no different from those that had been defined by de Gaulle" (Martial, 1992:117; as cited in Sjovaag, 1998:33). Although the permanent seat at the UN Security Council, independent nuclear force, long-range power projection capability and strong political influence over former colonies might tempt Paris to opt for a unilateral action in some cases, the French vision of *l'Europe puissanse* has not lost its élan. Being the least "Atlanticist" of the EU's "Big Three" and keen on building up the EU as a power[8], France will presumably shape her policies to enable (or at least not to hinder) the EU Foreign Minister to live up to his legal functions.

Britain: Ever since 1973 Britain has been the least integrationist, the most skeptical and resistant to Europeanism, and the staunchest adherent of "Atlanticism," frequently dubbed as "awkward partner," "detached" or "semi-detached" (George, 1990; Soetendorp, 1999; White, 2001). And while the last decades have seen her slowly move towards European direction, underpinning principles of British foreign policy, i.e. faithfulness to NATO and Anglo-American partnership, remain unscathed. Another hallmark of British foreign policy which is relevant for this paper is the fact that while basically agreeing with the necessity of harmonization of national foreign policies in the EU, Downing Street continues resistance against any perceived erosion of either foundations or symbols of foreign policy[9]. Viewed in this light, the initial British opposition to the wording "minister" during the discussions of the EU Foreign Minister was not unexpected.

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[7] Importance of this point has been underlined by Rummel: "If the largest country of the EU were to shift its orientation and to follow a more unilateralist path, the impact on other members, on the Union as a whole, and on the political order in Europe could be dramatic." (Rummel, 1996:41)

[8] As French Minister of Defense, Harve de Charette, stated in February 1997, "Europe, if it wants to become a major actor in the next century on the international scene, should accept the responsibilities and with them the burden of being more powerful" (as cited in Boyer, 1998:102).

[9] "[Both Thatcher and Major]… conformed to the basic paradigm of a Britain which accepts an increasing enmeshment in the European foreign policy network, while (like the other major players) never being fully trapped or having to surrender its national freedom of maneouvre." (Hill, 1996:73)

2.5. Foreign Minister – Yet another Feature of Conventional Nation-State

While the wording "Constitutional Treaty" aims to appease both ardent pro-Europeans and diehard Eurosceptics, as according to Wessels the term "Constitution" commonly though not exclusively refers to a state-like formation while "Treaty" underscores an international agreement among EU states (Wessels, 2005), the notion of "Foreign Minister" undoubtedly represents a feature endemic only to sovereign states. The principle foreign policy innovation of the Constitutional Treaty, the proposed EU Foreign Minister, bears a considerable symbolic value since even a simple discussion of this concept underscores the sea change in the perceptions of policy makers. Notwithstanding its apprehension as a step towards further integration or as a move that undermines state sovereignty, the symbolic value of introducing the post of the EU Foreign Minister should not be either downplayed or overlooked. The initial British concern about the wording backs this chain of reasoning, as there is an ever-increasing perception that integration forces slowly but steadily encroach once monolithic sovereignty of a Westphalian nation-state. As Wessels has put it, "…it is noticeable that the last strongholds of the nation state's exclusive competences – the domain reserves – are increasingly restricted." (Wessels, 2005)

2.6. Foreign Minister – More Coherence, More Consistency, More Continuity

According to the Art. I-28 (4) of the Constitutional Treaty, the Minister "shall ensure the consistency of the Union's external action." Similarly, the official-website of the EU, Europe – The European Union On-Line, states that "the purpose of introducing such a role was to make the European Union's external action more effective and coherent, the Minister for Foreign Affairs becoming in effect the voice of the Union's common foreign and security policy."

Leaving aside the declaratory statements, it would be interesting to check what kind of improvements the introduction of the EU Foreign Affairs Minister is likely to bring about, if any. Stavridis, for instance, argues that institutional design of the CFSP is largely irrelevant for the Union's performance in external actions (Stavridis 1997; in Hix, 2004). In this case, more effective decision-making won't matter if the member states' political commitment fluctuates, since the EU is simply a vehicle through which the member states – sovereign actors in foreign policy issues – promote and pursue the interests.

The viability of the said assumption could be contested on several grounds. First, as I have noted elsewhere, a growing number of scholars argues that the Western European states no more are classical examples of the Westphalian model, i.e. sole shapers of their respective foreign policies. As Karen Smith has explained: "Once the member states have agreed that the EU should pursues particular objectives, they become involved in a process in which their initial preferences are reshaped, and in which they must make compromises over how these objectives will be achieved… Declarations and statements create expectations that the EU will act… and make it difficult to roll back rhetorical commitments to pursue objectives. And, through this process, the EU's international identity thus haltingly, gradually, acquires more substance." (Karen Smith, 2003:197-8; as cited in Hix, 2004) Second, the CFSP configuration at a given time will have an importance since a quick action is the main prerequisite of success in some cases, especially crisis management situations[10], and the Foreign Affairs minister is likely to secure a more coordinated and rapid foreign policy-making capability. Third, while the CFSP evolution does not make up a distinguished story of success, its progress is clear and undeniable. As every student attending the Basics of Crisis Management course 101 knows that to grasp the essence of a particular crisis is the first step towards its solution, likewise each failure of the CSFP has revealed the flaws that needed urgent treatment. As Hill observes: "A certain ratchet effect is observable in hindsight; each crisis, each humbling failure leading to a modest but cumulative improvements in commitment and procedure." (Hill, 1996: 13) Fourth, ignoring the office of the European Foreign Affairs

[10] "[M]ember states were willing to introduce qualified majority voting because the need to reach a quick decision is more important than preservation of national sovereignty in this area" (Wagner, 2003; in Hix, 2004).

Minister while contemplating on the future of the CFSP seems to be erroneous at best, not least because of the reasons outlined in the previous section. In addition, it would be very helpful to look into the intricacies of the foreign policy making via analyzing the role of Foreign Affairs Minister and its supporting apparatus because the former is inseparable from the latter and because the latter is a historically approved medium of providing coherent, consistent and continual policy in the foreign policy field. The institutional value of Foreign Affairs Minister was even suggested to go beyond the realm of nation-states, as Stopford and Strange observed: "World-class firms almost need a kind of foreign ministry and a cadre of corporate diplomats that combine local expertise of dealing with governments in other countries." (Stopford and Strange, 1991) Better institutional memory should also be mentioned along other improvements that the EU Foreign Minister and his apparatus are likely to bring about, alongside larger access to the administrative resources – representing the pool of national and community resources (Wessels 2004).

Conclusion

Notwithstanding the institutional refinement, the real-world power of the EU Foreign Affairs Minister will still largely depend on the member states, particularly the larger ones. Considering the limited number of available pro-active instruments, whether the Minister's proposals will ever reify or remain a "dead letter" will be determined by the member states' decision to throw their political weight behind them or not. In this case, the choice has to be made between the "pro-active" minister and the "legitimizer" minister who does nothing but rubber-stamping.

Another issue of concern brings us back to Solana's performance as the High Representative of the CFSP. While naturally there is nothing wrong with a successful performance as in Solana's case, one has to remember that power, authority and competence of a high-ranking official, in our case the EU Foreign Minister, should stem not from his own personal charisma and good connections, but from Treaty provisions or other legal foundations, i.e. should be duly institutionalized.

A poll conducted in 2002 revealed that 65% of respondents in six European countries – namely, the UK, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and Poland – though that the EU should "become a superpower like the US; and the respective figure for France was 91%. This clearly shows the strength of the (super)-power building imperative with regards to the European Union; the idea of a capable EU well understood and supported by the public.

Finally, it has to be noted that while the Foreign Policy Analysis seems to provide a number of useful insights regarding the possible implications of the EU Foreign Minister on the EU Foreign Policy, other theoretical tools, especially the fusion theory, seem to be promising to supplement the analysis with more focus on the internal institutional machinery.

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